

Summer Work

DVR Pre-ETS



“In the beginning it was difficult because of my anxiety but after a while the puzzle pieces came together. I do feel I was taught important work skills.”

More Than a Paycheck

Since 2017, DVR has provided over 1,200 students with disabilities the opportunity to gain valuable paid work experience through its Summer Work Programs.

Paid work experience while in high school has been shown to be a good predictor of post school success in employment for students with disabilities. It provides students the opportunity to practice work readiness skills, explore different career options, and gain an understanding of workplace culture and expectations. Additionally, summer work experience helps a student identify necessary workplace supports, as well as build self-esteem.

DVR funds 16 summer work program sites run by school districts and community organizations across the state. Each summer work program site provides 145 hours of paid work experience with an Alaskan business and 15 hours of work readiness instruction. Instruction focuses on the development of work readiness and independent living skills such as communication, teamwork, professionalism, time management, and financial literacy.



Students leave the summer work program with a completed “My Career Plan” that identifies their strengths, needed accommodations, and a career path towards future employment or postsecondary education/training.

Alaskan businesses play a significant role in the Summer Work Program and are a primary reason for its success. To date, over 250 businesses have welcomed summer work participants by providing work experience sites, specific job training, company tours, and job shadows.

Summer is the perfect time for students to be immersed in a work experience. They have the time available to fully participate without having to juggle the demands of school or forgo extracurricular activities.